

Supporting Academic and Social Continuity for Mobile Elementary Students

May 14, 2026

OneOp.org/learn/160133



Webinar Essentials



Visit the event page to download a copy of the webinar slides and any additional resources.



Select ***'Everyone'*** from the drop-down menu when commenting in the chat pod.



This webinar has been approved to offer continuing education credit. Stay tuned for more information!



Email us if you need tech support or have questions.

Contact@OneOp.org

OneOp.org/learn/160133

About OneOp

Supporting your work so you can better support military families.



Who We Are

A DoW & Cooperative Extension partnership supporting professionals who serve military families.

Our Mission

Strengthening military family service providers through accessible, research-informed learning.

What We Offer

Free, online professional development through webinars, podcasts, courses, and more.



The views expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Department of War, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Government or OneOp. The mention of any entity or product is for informational purposes only.

This material is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Office of Military Family Readiness Policy, U.S. Department of Defense under Award Number 2023-48770-41333.



Natasha Cabrera, Ph.D.
Professor
University of Maryland

Today's Presenter

Learning Objectives

Webinar Overview

This webinar provides practical strategies to keep children engaged, connected, and successful through relocation and other school transitions.

1

Identify strategies to promote and maintain academic continuity for mobile students, including the timely transfer of IEP and 504 plans

2

Apply practices that support social integration with peers and teachers during school transitions

3

Recognize and address the unique educational needs of mobile and homeschooling families

Let's Chat!

What is one feeling elementary age students might have when starting at a new school?



Select ***'Everyone'*** from the drop-down menu when commenting in the chat pod.

Elementary School: Change & Growth

Some children adapt easily; others struggle with change.

Academic and social supports help children thrive.

Elementary years build resilience and problem-solving skills.



Elementary Years: Ages and Development

Age Range

- Ages 5 - 11 years
 - K - 5th grade
- Early Childhood: 5 - 7 years
- Middle Childhood: 8 - 11 years

Assets

- Rapid growth in skills and independence
- Developing social skills and autonomy
- Increasing problem-solving abilities

Considerations

- Early puberty may begin
- Increased risk-taking
- Emotional and social changes

Elementary Students Developmentally

5-to-7-Year-Old Students	8- and 9-Year-Old Students	10-to-11-Year-Old Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fine and gross motor skills• Engage in activities (e.g., painting)• Academic skills (e.g., reading, writing, math)• Social skills and making friendships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More developed motor skills• Dress and groom self completely• Use tools (e.g., building, cooking, grooming)• Friendships become more important	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early puberty• Cognitive skills continue to develop• Friends and peers are central to their lives

Let's Chat!

Think about a child you've supported during a transition.
What skill helped them adjust the most?



Select ***Everyone*** from the drop-down menu when commenting in the chat pod.

Developmental Skills That Support Change

- Social and executive function skills support flexible adjustment
- Friendship skills help children feel connected and confident
- Supportive environments help shy or cautious children thrive



Developmental Skills That Support Change



- Strong cognitive, academic, and social skills support smoother transitions
- Success in academics, activities, and friendships builds confidence
- Confidence helps children engage and adapt in new settings

Resilience Builds Adaptability

Resilience: “...the capacity of a [child] to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the viability, function, or development of the [child].”

Resilient children can:

- Overcome serious hardship
- Adapt and thrive despite adversity
- Resume positive functioning following change
- Remain optimistic and can see the “silver lining” in many situations

Resilience Looks Different for Every Child

Individual Differences

- Children respond to change in different ways
- Some adapt quickly, while others may need more time and support

Home Learning Experiences

- Supportive home environments help children adjust more easily



Keeping Learning on Track During Moves

Coordinated systems help students stay on track.



Understand Needs

- Know what students require to thrive



Reduce Disruption

- Minimize breaks in instruction



Preserve Learning

- Maintain progress across schools

Mobile students may move due to military relocation, caregiver employment, housing instability, foster care, or seasonal work.

Prepare For Change Before It Happens

1

Make Change Predictable (if possible)

- Talk about when the change will happen
- Brainstorm how it might feel

2

Encourage Expression

- Invite children to share positive and hard feelings
- Validate feelings (e.g., "I'll miss my friends")

3

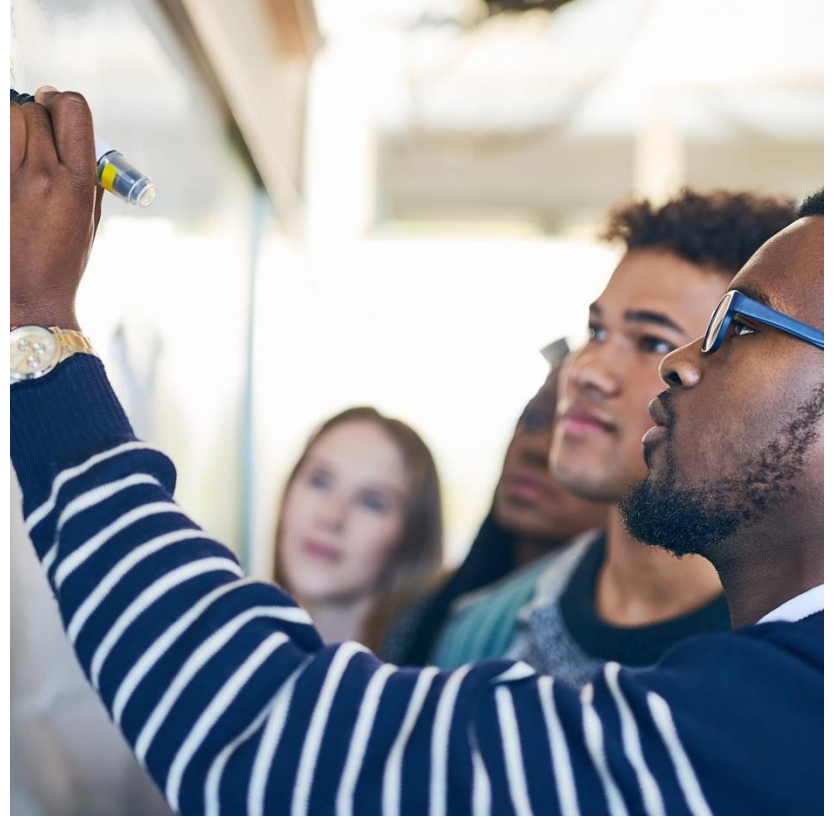
Offer Support and Connections

- Suggest ways to stay in touch
- Connect with the new teacher (letters or video)

Coping with Change and Building Connection

- Practice Coping
 - Introduce small, manageable changes
 - Brainstorm ways to cope together
- Begin to connect
 - Start pen pals or send cards
 - Try to connect with the new teacher
 - Celebrate birthdays across classrooms
 - Share welcome notes or photos from new students

Systems-Level Supports



Curriculum Alignment & Consistency

- **Use Consistent Learning Goals**
 - Standardize instruction across schools and districts
- **Follow and Share Scope and Sequence**
 - Minimize learning gaps and repetition
- **Use Portable, High-Quality Materials**
 - Support continuity across school moves

Records, Assessment, & Placement Practices



Transfer Records Efficiently

- Real-time electronic record transfer
- Interoperable data systems

Remember! Obtain signed consent where necessary.



Use Portable Learning information

- Student learning profiles or portfolios
- Rapid entry assessments



Place Students Accurately

- Competency-based placement
- Clear credit transfer policies

Let's Chat!

What is one barrier you've seen when transferring student records? How have you seen those barriers addressed?



Select ***Everyone*** from the drop-down menu when commenting in the chat pod.

School Supports & Targeted Interventions

Coordinate Support

- Assign transition coordinators or liaisons
 - Provide family orientation sessions

Build Connections

- Peer buddies or mentorship programs
- Extracurricular activities

Strengthen Learning

- Tutoring or small-group instruction
- Extended learning time

Support Language Needs

- Language services, as needed

Family Engagement & Communication

- **Communicate Consistently**
 - Use reliable communication channels
 - Offer multilingual outreach
- **Include the Whole Family**
 - Identify and engage all caregivers
 - Provide clear information about credits and services
- **Partner Beyond the School**
 - Collaborate with community organizations

Social-Emotional & Trauma-Informed Supports



Recognize mobility may bring stress or instability



Provide school-based mental health and trauma-informed supports



Create predictable routines and supportive classrooms

Policy, Coordination, & Technology

Policy Supports

- Strengthen protections (e.g., ESSA)
- Coordinate across districts and states
- Support transportation stability

Technology Supports

- Use learning management systems
- Ensure device and internet access
- Offer asynchronous learning options

Systems-Level Resources - MIC3 Compact

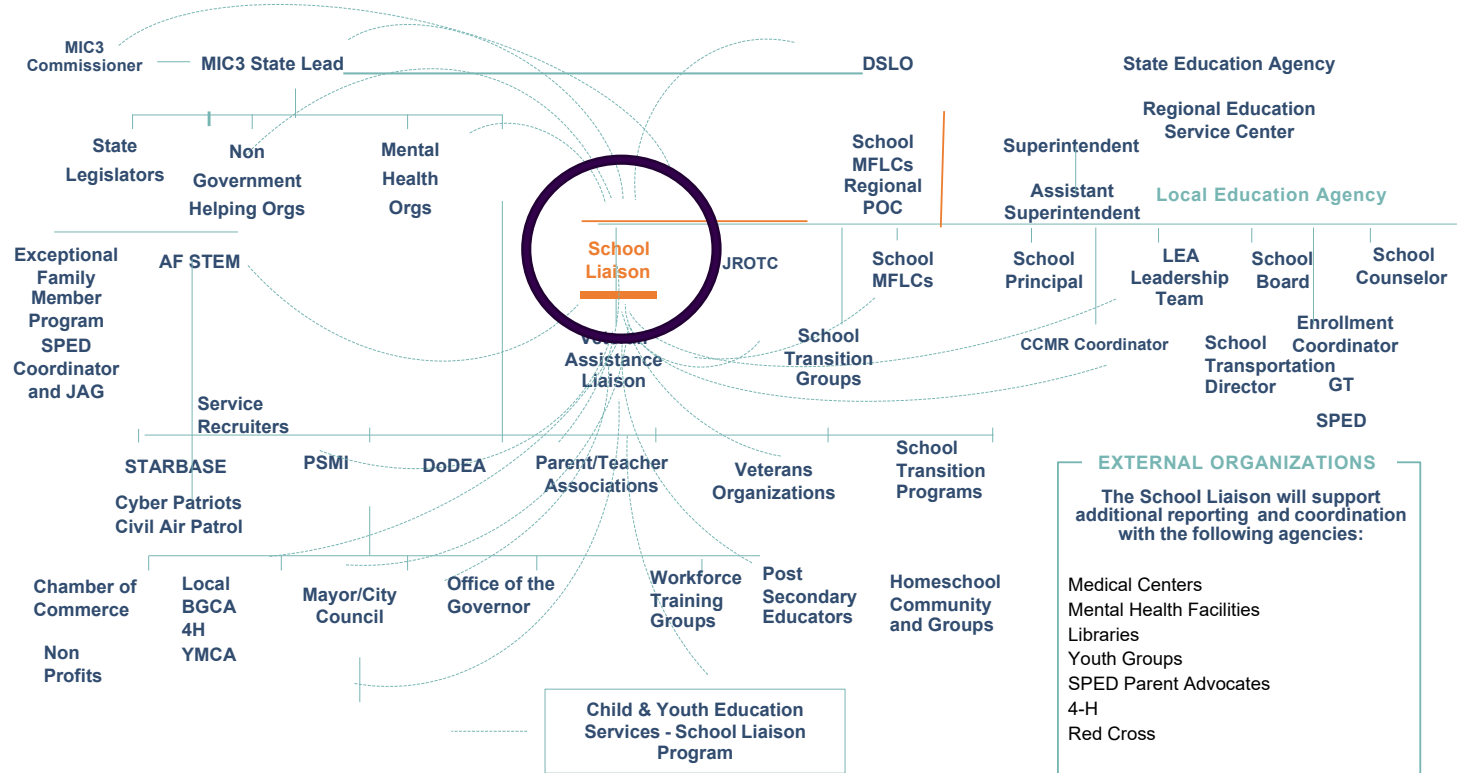
To view this video, visit https://youtu.be/7QrmVUs9jos?si=LCgNWECbgejOV2o_

Systems-Level Resources – School Liaisons

- Experts in understanding the K – 12 system
- Almost every military installation has a school liaison
- They are highly knowledgeable about both military life and K – 12 systems
- They work at a higher level, assisting with system connections.
 - They assist with developing family-to-school partnerships
 - They work with families and monitor trends for systemic problems/patterns.

School Liaison Program

Community Stakeholders Interaction Chart



KEY

The School Liaison will partner with various organizations to resolve education challenges and or concerns

Active daily collaboration relationship

*Not a complete list

To view this video, visit https://youtu.be/arzhk2lgNuU?si=yCfjO_A2UQLdBHfs

Classroom-Level Practices



Preparing Educators to Support Mobile Students

Recognize Student Needs

- Respond to mobility-related disruptions
- Interpret varied academic records
- Use flexible instructional strategies

Teach Responsively

- Use context-aware practices
- Connect learning to students' traditions and experiences

Coordinate Supports

- Collaborate across schools and states
- Connect students to supplemental and support services

Flexible Instructional Strategies:

Supporting Access & Entry for ALL learners



Flexible Grouping

- Rotate students based on need, interest, or task
- Regroup as needs change



Tiered Assignments

- Same learning goal
- Vary complexity or support



Modular/Chunked Instruction

- Break lessons into short modules
- Allow flexible entry points

Flexible Instructional Strategies:

Supporting Progress & Continuity



Student Choice

- Offer options in topics, formats, or products



Blended Learning

- Combine in-person and digital learning
- Maintain access during absences or moves



Self-Paced Learning

- Students progress at their own speed
- Use checklists or digital tools

Flexible Instructional Strategies:

Supporting Understanding



Scaffolding & Gradual Release

- Provide structured supports first
- Gradually increase independence



Multi-Modal Instruction

- Present content in multiple ways
- Use visual, auditory, and hands-on methods



Formative Assessment

- Use quick checks to monitor learning
- Adjust instruction based on student needs

Flexible Instructional Strategies:

Supporting Individual Pathways



Learning Contracts/Personalized Plans

- Set individual goals and timelines
- Include checkpoints and supports



Open Entry/Exit Tasks

- Design lessons students can join easily
- Provide brief summaries or “on-ramps”



Competency-Based Progression

- Advance based on mastery
- Reduce penalties for interrupted learning

Poll

Which strategy are you considering learning more about or investigating?

1. Flexible Grouping
2. Tiered Assignments
3. Modular/Chunked Instruction
4. Student Choice
5. Blended Learning
6. Self-Paced Learning
7. Scaffolding & Gradual Release
8. Multi-Modal Instruction
9. Formative Assessment
10. Learning Contracts/Personalized Plans
11. Open Entry/Exit Tasks
12. Competency-Based Progression



Please respond using the poll pop-up feature.
If the poll does not appear for you , please leave your answer in the chat.



Welcoming & Orientation Routines

Why This Matters

- Reduces stress and helps students focus on learning

Provide Ongoing Orientation

- Offer rolling orientation session
- Don't limit orientation to beginning of semester

Teach Classroom Routines

- Explicitly teach expectations and norms

Share Welcome Resources

- Provide schedules, maps, and key contacts
- Include extracurricular opportunities

Structured Peer Connection Systems

Why This Matters

- Reduces isolation
- Gives students a trusted “go-to” person

Peer Buddy Programs

- Pair new students with trained peers

Peer Ambassador Teams

- Student leaders welcome newcomers
- Model routines and expectations

Interest-Based Matching

- Pair students with shared interests
- Support natural friendships

Peer Connection Resources

4-H Military
Partnerships

Anchored4Life

Boys & Girls Club
of America

Student2Student

Supporting a New Student

Jordan, 4th grade

- Moved to a new school from another state during the middle of the year
- Doesn't know anyone
- Seems quiet during group work
- Eats lunch alone
- Has missed several weeks of instruction

What is one strategy you would try first?



Intentional Teacher-Student Relationship Building

Why This Matters

- A trusted adult relationship is the strongest predictor of belonging and engagement

Daily Check-Ins

- Brief, consistent connection lowers anxiety

Two-by-Ten Strategy

- Spend 2 minutes daily for 10 days building rapport

Strength-Based Introductions

- Learn and highlight student skills and interests early

Inclusive Classroom Practices

Why This Matters

- Students connect more easily when they feel seen, valued, and included

Structure Peer Interaction

- Use cooperative learning and rotating roles
- Include low-stakes participation routines

Integrate Students into Groups

- Use flexible grouping
- Ensure new students are included regularly

Value Student Experiences

- Invite students to share prior experiences
- Use materials that reflect students' languages and backgrounds
- Frame mobility as experience, not deficit

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Supports

Why This Matters

- Social engagement increases when students share interests and experiences

Small-Group Social Learning

- Friendship skills
- Navigating new environments
- Coping with transitions

Targeted Student Supports

- Access to counselors, special education professionals, or transition groups
- Support for newly enrolled students

Interest-Based Activities

- Fast-track access to clubs and sports
- Interest-based or language groups
- "Try-It Weeks" to explore activities

Staff Coordination

Why This Matters

- Consistent routines and expectations prevent students from “starting over” in each classroom

Create a Shared Transition Plan

- Coordinate across teachers, counselors, and administrators

Share Key Student Information

- Student background (as appropriate)
- Specific supports needed

Family Engagement

Connect Families

- Link families with other families or networks
- Invite participation in school events

Communicate Clearly

- Share social opportunities regularly
- Use clear, multilingual communication

Monitor Student Integration

- Track peer connections and participation
- Review attendance and engagement
- Schedule 30-, 60-, and 90-day check ins



Fatherhood Focus

Recognize the Father-Child Relationship

- Fathers play a critical role in children's development
- Each father-child relationship is unique

Use Inclusive, Intentional Language

- Say "mothers and fathers" to signal both are valued

Support Father-to-Father Connection

- Encourage connections with other fathers
- Especially during separation or transitions

Fatherhood Focus – Deployments/TDY

Encourage Open Conversations

- Talk about feelings (e.g., sadness, fear)
- Validate children's emotions

Model Healthy Coping

- Acknowledge your own feelings
- Show positive ways to cope

Offer Simple Coping Strategies

- Write a letter or send a message
- Share a video or tell a joke
- Finds ways to stay connected



Let's Chat!

What is one way your school or organization connects with moms, dads, and other caregivers?



Select ***Everyone*** from the drop-down menu when commenting in the chat pod.



Continuity, Alignment, & Flexible Access

Assess & Place Flexibly

- Use diagnostic assessments to identify skill levels
- Use competency-based placements

Recognize Prior Learning

- Accept homeschool coursework
- Use portfolios, assessments, or dual enrollment

Offer Flexible Access Options

- Part-time or hybrid enrollment
- Online learning options
- Rolling enrollment timelines

Personal Learning Plans, Credit, & Policies

Develop Personalized Learning Plans

- For students with interrupted schooling
- For homeschooled students entering schools
- Include prior learning, strengths, and acceleration needs

Create Clear Credit Policies

- Accept homeschool credits
- Support interstate transfers

Prepare Staff to Interpret Records

- Review non-traditional transcripts
- Use portfolios and alternative assessments

Family Partnerships & Service Access

Support Mobile Families

- Maintain continuity of information across moves

Partner With Homeschool Families

- Treat families as instructional partners
- Align expectations while respecting family approaches

Ensure Access to Key Supports

- Special education services
- Language supports
- Counseling and extracurricular opportunities

Transition Supports & Learning Portability

Why This Matters

- Helps students adjust to school experiences
- Supports consistent documentation of learning

Academic Onboarding

- Teach classroom norms
- Introduce assessment formats
- Clarify pacing expectations

Learning Documentation Tools

- Use digital portfolios
- Provide access to learning management systems

Professional Development for Educators

Understand Varied Learning Backgrounds

- Recognize that students enter with different educational experiences

Use Strengths-Based Perspectives

- Avoid deficit assumptions about homeschooling or mobility

Interpret Non-Linear Learning Points

- Recognize that progress may not follow a traditional sequence

Let's Chat!

What is one strategy from today you plan to try?



Select ***Everyone*** from the drop-down menu when commenting in the chat pod.

**Any
Questions?**

Contact Info

- Natasha Cabrera, Ph.D.
ncabrera@umd.edu





**Early Intervention Support for a
Unique Population: Serving
Those Who Serve**
May 28, 2026

Upcoming Webinar: Register Now

This webinar looks at challenges military-connected children may face and how these can affect development. Participants will learn how Division for Early Childhood (DEC) Recommended Practices and the Educational Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS) coaching approach help families support their child's growth and learning.

 OneOp.org/learn/160144

Claim Continuing Education Credits



Continuing Education

Approved for **1.5** CE credits from the following organizations:

- National Council on Family Relations
- MiRegistry/Michigan Education Association
- Center for Leadership and Learning
- University of Texas at Austin, Steve Hicks School of Social Work
- Certificate of Attendance
- And more!



Evaluation

Complete the evaluation and post-test on the event page

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Your input helps shape stronger, more effective webinars

Become a Powerful Provider Via OneOp

- Access a wide range of free, expert-developed resources to build your professional skills
- Follow us on social media to stay engaged with the latest insights
- Join our emailing list to hear about upcoming CE opportunities



Discover the OneOp Podcast

- Conversations with experts who support military families
- Practical insights to strengthen connection and collaboration



Practicing
Connection

Read Our Newsletter

Sign up for our newsletter to get new episodes and updates delivered to your inbox

Find Us On LinkedIn

Join us on LinkedIn to connect with other professionals who support military families

Resources at the Ready

Timely support for those who serve military families

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Deployment & Family Separation
- Mental Health & Resilience
- Financial Disruptions
- Parenting & Child Behavior
- Community Support

A Dedicated Hub for Providers



A curated collection of webinars and expert content built for the moment and designed for impact